

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
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LOS ANGELES 7
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Dr. Joshua Lederberg
College of Agriculture
University of Wisconsin
Madison 6, Wisconsin

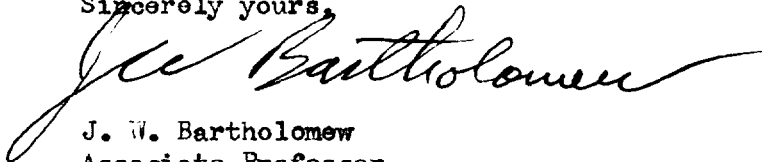
Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I was interested to learn of your new course "Heredity and Microorganisms". If it develops as much student interest as the one given here you can anticipate a most pleasant experience teaching the course.

The greatest pitfall, as I have found in teaching this material, is a lack of information on the part of both the student and the instructor concerning the genetics of both yeast and Neurospora. In my opinion, it would be best to start with a brief review of the principles of genetics using these forms as illustrations. In my course, I do not pretend to be an expert in the genetics of microorganisms. Therefore, I do not lecture. I have organized the course in the form of a seminar, but according to the students, I have conceived a very diabolical scheme. To keep everyone participating in the course material, I use as my text the 1946 Cold Spring Harbor Symposium, which I try to bring up to date by assigning current and recent literature. My method has been to assign a particular article in the Symposium, plus the necessary literature references, to the whole seminar. It is understood that everyone will read the material and be sufficiently prepared to present the material to the rest of the seminar if called upon. At the beginning of the seminar I select any of the students at random to present the material. The rest of the students have complete freedom to interrupt for questions, discussion, or correction. This means that everyone is familiar enough with the material to participate in the discussion and to make intelligent interpretations. This system has proven to be a real trap for the unprepared student and has resulted in some of the best discussions that I have ever seen in a seminar course.

I might add that the only reason for making it a seminar type course is my own feeling of inadequacy on my part to present this material as a lecture course. In my opinion it could probably be best presented as a lecture course and I am sure no one could do this better than yourself. I hope that this letter will be of some use to you.

Sincerely yours,



J. W. Bartholomew
Associate Professor
Dept. of Bacteriology

JWB:vjr